

THE FOURTH REPUBLIC ABDICATES

Anatomy of the Crisis

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PARIS

"INCAPABLE of living decently," wrote Hubert Beuve-Méry in *Le Monde* at the end of May, "the Fourth Republic does not know how to die with dignity." "It didn't even die," commented a Gaullist leader; "it crept away and hid in a ditch." The humorous weekly *Canard Enchaîné* ran this advertisement on June 4: "TO LET—Vast premises, ideal show-room, etc., can seat 680, view over Place de la Concorde, available immediately. Write C. de Gaulle." That just about summed up the whole affair. A few deputies received telephone calls threatening them with reprisals if they voted against de Gaulle, and an effort was made to undermine the morale of parliamentarians and journalists with rumors of troop movements; but the issue was never in doubt.

Yet only a few weeks earlier the French people had passed a substantial vote of confidence in the Republic. Local elections in every part of the country showed a general consolidation of support for the traditional republican parties. "REMARKABLE STABILITY OF THE ELECTORATE," proclaimed the Paris press. The Gaullist *Républicains Sociaux*, and the right-wing extremists who were shortly to enjoy so startling a triumph, received only a fraction of the poll. Indeed, in most *cantons* Gaullism was not considered

a live issue and the right was divided. One right-wing paper, recording that only a hard core of hangers-on still spoke of de Gaulle as a potential savior, noted that some of the General's keenest supporters were now fellow-travelers. There can be little doubt that had de Gaulle been content to sit in his village and await the nation's call he would still be waiting. Few democrats are as yet reconciled to the fact that he was propelled to power by a coalition of demagogues and mutinous army officers. The mass of the French people are neither enthusiastically for nor decidedly against him, while among his present supporters are many who opposed him in 1940-44. Between May 13 and May 16, under cover of darkness, teams of Poujadists and other right-wing extremists sped by car throughout the southwest of France to daub road junctions and public buildings with the Cross of Lorraine and the "V" sign: the same men would have denounced to the Gestapo or Vichy's militia any Gaullist they found chalking up these symbols during the German occupation. Ex-Vichyites now argue openly that de Gaulle's alliance with the army vindicates Pétain's rejection of the Third Republic, and conservatives generally support him for the sort of reasons which have always made the French right yearn for "strong" government.

A widespread comment now is: "Well, at least he'll stand up to the Americans and prevent them from making off with the rest of our colonies and our Saharan oil." This may serve to explain why, outside the Communist ranks, hostility to de Gaulle is muted. Opposition Radicals and left-wing Socialists tend to concentrate their not very impressive fire on his "sponsors." As for de Gaulle personally, many of them admire

SINCE RAY ALAN's last appearance in COMMENTARY ("Rival Blocs in the Middle East," April) the storm center has shifted to North Africa, where the Algerian rebellion sparked a political upheaval in France and the return to power of General de Gaulle. In analyzing these dramatic events, Mr. Alan draws on wide experiences as an observer in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. His present home is in France.

him for his past record; and, while generally mistrusting military men who intervene in politics, they would in normal circumstances be prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. They might even swallow their dislike of the financial and "technocratic" elements in his administration, whom de Gaulle will probably dominate without difficulty. But what of the men who rushed him to power, the men of USRAF (of which more later) and the Algerian Public Safety Committees, some of whom are still calling for the abolition of political parties in France? "These are the sort of people," said a friend of Mendès-France, "who have never reconciled themselves to the Republic. They have never had any use for parliamentary democracy other than to exploit it in their own interest. You find them hovering over the scene of every major crisis in post-revolutionary French history, slaverling with eagerness to demolish representative institutions, hand the schools back to the monks, and muzzle the press. Anyone who imagines that having pulled off a *coup* of this magnitude—having established a working alliance with popular right-wing army officers as well as the usual neo-fascist gangs—they will meekly help de Gaulle make our democratic institutions more efficient, ought to have his head examined."

As against this, a regional Socialist party secretary suggested that this danger was roughly Guy Mollet's reason for wanting a foothold within the de Gaulle administration from the start. "De Gaulle has very few clear political ideas and only a vague understanding of economics. For him France is a mystical entity, a cathedral-like void uninhabited by mere flesh-and-blood Frenchmen and unsullied by political and economic facts. If we made no effort to fill the void for him, his sponsors would. It is our duty to counterbalance their influence, to keep an eye on their activities, and seize whatever opportunities develop of exploiting their differences. This can only be done from within the de Gaulle administration." But will de Gaulle's "sponsors" allow themselves to be "counterbalanced"? There is

every indication that they are more than a match for the temporizing M. Mollet.

THE latter-day "Gaullists" who brought the Fourth Republic to its knees (and are now upset because de Gaulle refuses to play their game) can be divided into three groups: Algerian *colons*, parachutist officers, and right-wing politicians.

Algeria's European settlers have a right to be proud of their material accomplishments without which the country would in all probability resemble Yemen or Oman. But they have never been able to forget that they possess Algeria by right of conquest, a right that would be challenged if the fast-multiplying Moslem masses around them ceased to respect their strength and technical superiority. The pre-war review *L'Afrique Latine* summed up their attitude thus: "We French are at home in Algeria. We made ourselves masters of the country by force—for a conquest can only be realized by force and implies necessarily the existence of conquerors and conquered—and then proceeded to organize it as we wished—a fact which reaffirms the principle of the superiority of the conqueror to the conquered, of the civilized man to his inferior. . . . We are thus the legitimate owners of the country."

From this sort of outlook to racism is a short step, and racist tendencies among the settlers were intensified from the start by the fact that a majority of them were not, in the Algerian phrase, *Français de France*, but immigrants from the more backward areas of Andalusia, Sicily, southern Italy, Malta, and Corsica, where living standards were nearer the Arab than the prevailing Western European level. These "poor whites" (the French term is "*petits blancs*") frequently had to compete with Moslems for employment and were themselves despised and sometimes exploited by the richer *colons*—a situation which impelled them to assert on every occasion their superiority to the "natives," and to be (as they saw it) more French than the French. Moreover, this preponderance of settlers from communi-

ties lacking liberal and democratic traditions hampered the growth of reformist movements and played into the hands of the thirty or forty European landowners with really vast holdings who had every reason to fear any kind of reformism, Moslem or European.

The big *colons'* wealth, political and administrative influence, and control of the press, has enabled them to keep alive the "We-are-here-by-right-of-conquest" mentality, exploit "poor white" Arabophobia (and anti-Semitism) and vilify the liberals in France (some of them, conveniently, Jews) who urge a more enlightened approach to North African problems. Since the foundation of the Fourth Republic they have poured out billions of francs in support of right-wing papers and politicians committed to the defense of their privileges. They have subsidized reactionary groups such as the Poujadists, and overtly neo-fascist bodies (among them Biaggi's "Patriotic Revolutionary" party and more than a dozen ex-servicemen's organizations) whose chief purpose is to break up liberal and socialist meetings and frustrate rational discussion of the Algerian question. They have inundated the French army in Algeria with propaganda intended to discredit the parliamentary regime and warn all ranks against "another sell-out by the politicians." More than a thousand free copies of a booklet entitled *Counter-revolution: Strategy and Tactics* were distributed last winter to officers and NCO's by a settler organization: printed in Belgium (it was banned in France), it urged the French army to follow Franco's example, "march on Paris" and establish a "military regime of national renovation." One appreciative reader, who quoted it to his visitors, was a certain General Massu.

THE 400,000-strong French army in Algeria comprises fewer than 35,000 first-class fighting troops, the bulk of them paratroopers and Legionnaires. By the end of last winter the "*paras*" had come to feel that practically the whole weight of France's Algerian war effort lay on their shoulders.

In Algeria, as in France, business was prospering as never before; Algeria's European businessmen were piling up handsome profits (which they invested in real estate in France) from the military expenditure in their midst; the proliferation of administrative posts caused by the emergency meant that even the dimmest European youth could take his pick of pensionable jobs*; and most French troops in Algeria were engaged on guard and depot duties which, if boring, were not particularly perilous. Only the *paras* were constantly in action against the FLN (Algerian National Liberation Front), whose armed effectives were estimated early in May to number between twenty and twenty-five thousand.

Beneath this grievance festered a powerful complex, whose ultimate roots lay in the debacle of 1940. The French army is bound up with the national *mystique* in a way few Americans or Britons could begin to comprehend: even French leftists are apt to be shocked by anti-conscription arguments, and pacifists who try to avoid military service receive rough treatment. But in 1940 the army went down in defeat, and France's main contribution to her own liberation came not from the traditional custodians of her grandeur but from British-supplied irregulars—most of them workers and intellectuals, two categories of men the average French officer disdains. This long-drawn-out affront to French military pride has probably left fewer scars on the minds of France's brisk, efficient paratrooper officers than elsewhere in her armed forces. Their conviction that their corps is now the best and toughest of its kind within the Western alliance has salvaged their self-respect. They feel that however "soft" British or American airborne units may have gone in recent years, they at least did win their battle honors fighting a real enemy. "Our

*In order to become a civil service clerk or teacher, for example, Algerian Europeans need no longer possess the *baccalauréat* (school certificate), yet they are paid 70 per cent more than their opposite numbers in France, and exempted from the greater part of their military service.

entire existence has been devoted to tangling with natives—first in Indo-China, then in Tunisia and Morocco, finally in Egypt and Algeria. Incompetent politicians use us as maids-of-all-work and colonial policemen, and then, adding insult to injury, abandon us in a posture that to the outside world looks suspiciously like defeat.”

From the day the *paras* “took over” the Algerian war their slogan was “*Il faut que ça change*.” Their leader, Colonel Bigeard, required his officers to take a pledge not to leave Algeria until “final victory.” To troops undergoing training at his Philippeville depot he proclaimed: “We French have been swallowing humiliation for twenty years. It’s time we dished some out for a change. We must be prepared to go beyond every conventional limit. You will leave this depot different men—men fired with the faith of the Crusaders. . . .” For Bigeard (as for T. E. Lawrence, whose thinking he paralleled on many issues) there were no moral barriers. The FLN being the declared enemy, no means of combating it, and saving the army from the shame of another politically imposed defeat, could be neglected. Hence the use of torture—which no parachutist officer has denied—and the massive reprisals against villagers who may or may not have assisted the FLN. Hence the deliberate drive to uproot the moral inhibitions of newly arrived troops, to condition them for anti-guerrilla warfare at its most savage. Yet although racism may have infected their lower ranks, these elite units of the French army were not anti-Moslem. On the contrary, “good” Moslems, including deserters from the FLN, were given privileges and social services superior to any they enjoyed before the present emergency. Far from underwriting the selfish intransigence of the more influential European settlers, many officers clearly despised them. General Massu displayed his usual energy in breaking a strike called by the *colons* in September 1957, in protest against a timid move by the government of the day to improve the Moslems’ electoral status. One officer close to him said: “If, after dealing with the FLN,

we have to get rough with some of the *colons* in order to clear up this mess, we shan’t hesitate to do so.” The trouble was that the parachutist officers’ obsessive fear of a dishonorable settlement and their contempt for—and mistrust of—the professional politicians overrode all other considerations. As Paris abdicated more and more of its responsibilities they drifted steadily closer into alliance with the *colons*. Oddly enough, they seemed not to notice that this alliance was being manipulated by highly professional hands.

IT WAS the Socialist party leader, Guy Mollet, who on February 6, 1956, started the process which in the end led to last May’s *coup* in Algiers. Raised to power, in alliance with Mendès-France, to secure a peace settlement in Algeria, he abruptly reversed his policy after furious crowds had pelted him with tomatoes. “Even though I had a very unpleasant time, this unfortunate demonstration had a healthy aspect: it was the means whereby a great population was able to affirm its attachment to France,” he said rather lamely at the time. For the *colons*, the administration, and the army, the moral was plain; and thereafter the French government’s authority in the territory was little more than nominal. In October 1956 the aircraft taking Ben Bella and other FLN leaders from Casablanca to Tunis was intercepted by the Algiers authorities without consulting Paris and although this act set back Moroccan-Tunisian efforts to mediate between France and the FLN, the Mollet government meekly “covered” it. In January 1957 a group of European “ultras” tried to assassinate General Salan by firing a bazooka through his office window (he was thought to be too “soft” toward the Moslems): a major on the General’s staff lost his life in the outrage, but although the names of the assassins were widely known in Paris and Algiers, no action was taken against them. And early this year the bombing of Sakhiet-Sidi-Yussef, timed to frustrate a Franco-Tunisian rapprochement, earned its authors no more than a mild reprimand.

The lesson of M. Mollet's experience impressed itself equally forcibly upon observant politicians in Paris. Mollet had conceded to the Algiers mob the right to veto French policies. Might not its emotions be exploited to veto undesirable appointments also—and, conversely, to open the road to power to meritorious personalities? A vigorous drive for the Algerian settlers' favors, its theme the bankruptcy of the whole political "system," was opened by such pillars of the "system" as MM. Soustelle and Chaban-Delmas (both members of the *Républicains Sociaux*, the party which had succeeded General de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*), André Morice and Bourguès-Maunoury (both Radicals), Bidault (MRP) and Lacoste (Socialist). Soustelle, the most intelligent of the campaigners, was the best-placed to succeed. During the war he had directed de Gaulle's principal secret service, the DGER. From 1947, he had been secretary of the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, and from 1955 to 1956 Governor-General of Algeria. In March 1956 he launched a new organization, *l'Union pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française* (USRAF), to which Bidault and Morice rallied in due course. A year later he grafted onto it a secret subsidiary, responsible only to himself, whose principal organizer was a Paris businessman, René Dumont, who had been his assistant in the DGER. Dumont drew into the organization several thousand right-wing activists—wartime DGER operatives, former members of the RPF's tough *service d'ordre* (most of whom, to de Gaulle's chagrin, had once been Vichyites), demobilized officers and colonial policemen, settlers repatriated from Tunisia and Morocco—and established liaison with ex-servicemen's organizations, whose members include about 100,000 ex-parachutists. "Special services" were directed by Colonel Paillol, one of de Gaulle's wartime Intelligence officers, and a former commissioner of police named Melloero who had been involved in the murder of the Casablanca newspaper-owner Lemaigre-Dubreuil and an attempt on the life of Mendès-France!

LIAISON with the Algerian settlers' leaders was maintained through the many influential personal contacts Soustelle had established during his governorship. Prominent among them was M. Alain de Sérigny, director of the rabble-rousing *Echo d'Alger*, and public relations adviser of the *Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture d'Algérie* and the *Confédération Générale du Patronat Algérien*, to which all European landowners and businessmen pay a monthly "tax" for propaganda purposes. Through Sérigny a substantial subsidy was made available to USRAF. Neither Sérigny (whose editorials denouncing de Gaulle's "treason" in 1940 won him a decoration from Pétain) nor the interests he represented were Gaullist. Their chief concern was to combat the politicians whom they suspected of favoring a liberal solution in Algeria and, at the first opportunity, to bring to power a "tough" government whose members would include Soustelle, Bidault, Morice, and Chaban-Delmas. (According to one source, Soustelle had assured Sérigny that USRAF would not be employed to de Gaulle's advantage.) Yet, while collaborating closely with USRAF, Soustelle's fellow-Gaullist Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Defense Minister until May 13, also maintained a private *réseau* (network) of his own in Algeria. It was in the charge of an energetic, personable activist named Léon Delbecque whom Chaban-Delmas had nominated "permanent special representative" of the Defense Ministry in Algiers. Delbecque had come to prominence as an organizer and fund-raiser for de Gaulle's RPF among business circles in the Lille area of northern France; after the eclipse of the RPF he was regional organizer of the *Républicains Sociaux*. In Algiers he rapidly made himself the principal animator of the local Vigilance Committee, the center of a web of contacts linking the local end of USRAF, Chaban-Delmas's personal allies (for the most part Gaullists), a small group of politically minded army officers (notably General Allard and Colonel Trinquier), the Prefect (chief civil administrator), the Poujadists, the neo-fascist Students'

Association, and various ex-servicemen's organizations to which, as a friend of Biaggi's, he had ready access. Little of any political significance could be done in Algiers without his knowledge. On April 27, to test his strength, he organized—with Chaban-Delmas's approval—a demonstration which the Minister for Algeria, Lacoste, jealous of Chaban-Delmas's influence in "his" territory, banned. The demonstration was held nevertheless and attended by General Allard and Prefect Baret—who congratulated the demonstrators on their discipline!

Robert Lacoste, an old trade-unionist, appointed Minister Resident in Algeria by his party leader, Guy Mollet, during the latter's Premiership, meanwhile sought popularity in Algeria in the surrender of principle and authority. Early in 1957 he ceded to the army exceptional police powers which gave a small group of officers intimate control over every aspect of civil life in Algiers. He thought to ingratiate himself with the army by tolerating the use of torture and by inspiring a press campaign and street demonstrations against a parliamentary commission nominated in Paris to investigate certain charges. He ordered further demonstrations in his own support (and against his own party) when fellow Socialists criticized him. In the latter half of April, after the defeat of the Gaillard government (of which he was a member), Lacoste learned that a majority of his Socialist comrades in the National Assembly had decided to vote against any new Premier who proposed to retain him in Algiers. On May 9 he met representatives of the army and the Vigilance Committee to plan a major demonstration of protest against any government which did not include him, though he turned down a suggestion that he cling to his post in defiance of Paris. Then, declaring loudly and repeatedly that a "diplomatic Dien-Bien-Phu" was in preparation, and that if the moderate conservative Pflimlin became Premier, Algeria would be lost by October, he left for Paris, confidently expecting to return shortly. His alarmist declarations were duly played up by the *Echo d'Alger* and the pa-

triotic organizations: together with the conveniently timed announcement of the murder of three French prisoners by the FLN they played an important part in whipping up popular emotions. But his usefulness to the rebels had ended. The Vigilance Committee members were now publicly deriding his naivety and preparing a demonstration calculated to serve a final demand on Paris for a "strong" government.

LIKE M. Lacoste, Defense Minister Chaban-Delmas was about to relinquish his post. On May 11, having learned of the Vigilance Committee's plans from Delbecque, he ordered Colonel Trinquier, whom he had recently placed at the head of an elite parachutist regiment in eastern Algeria, to move his troops to Algiers. They arrived just in time to take over from the "commandos" of the Algerian Students' Association who sacked the great Government-General building and transformed the demonstration into a *coup*. The Students' Association, grouping both university and high school students, is a neo-fascist body whose leader, Lagailarde, a burly twenty-nine-year-old former *para* lieutenant, echoes Biaggi's catchphrases, preaches the need for totalitarianism, and denounces as a traitor anyone who advocates civil rights for Moslems. Both Lagailarde and Colonel Trinquier were in constant touch with Delbecque, among whose assets was a Defense Ministry radio network connecting him with local military commanders and with Paris. Another friend of Delbecque's, Colonel Godard, held police powers over the whole of Algiers and could have routed Lagailarde's students within fifteen minutes, had he so desired. Delbecque stands out as the obvious coordinator of Trinquier's "march on Algiers," Lagailarde's assault on the administration, and Godard's uncharacteristic inactivity; but in fact Lagailarde's students, closely followed by a mass of "poor whites" from the Spanish-Italian suburb of Bab el-Oued, went ahead on their own. It seems that no more than certain preliminaries had been planned for the afternoon of May 13, preparatory moves for a *coup*

that was to be effected only if news came from Paris that the demonstration had failed to secure a "strong" government. As things turned out, the mob rising on that day frustrated the whole purpose of the plot by robbing the *colons* of the "strong" (Bidault-Soustelle) government for which they had worked so hard. For, on hearing of the uprising, the National Assembly promptly invested Pflimlin (who might otherwise have been defeated) so as to have someone in office to cope with this new problem; and Pflimlin a few days later opened the door to de Gaulle—whose views on Algeria are far more "pro-Moslem" than those of even the most liberal of the parliamentary leaders whom the *colons* so dreaded! The rebels were caught in their own trap.

DURING the demonstration of May 13 a few isolated Gaullists had cried "*Vive de Gaulle!*" but without evoking any response from the crowds. De Gaulle was not mentioned in any of the early speeches by Salan and Massu. It was the resourceful Delbecque, now vice-president of the Algiers Public Safety Committee, who gave the movement a Gaullist orientation when, on May 15, it became clear that Salan was weakening and there was no sign of Pflimlin's resigning in favor of Bidault or Soustelle. Persuaded by Delbecque that only de Gaulle (who had just issued his first cryptic statement announcing his willingness to assume "the powers of the Republic") could now save the movement from defeat and disgrace, Salan appended a tentative "*Vive de Gaulle!*" to his next balcony speech. The following day Soustelle eluded a police guard round his Paris home to give the Public Safety Committee the experienced political leadership it lacked and assured it of de Gaulle's good will. Then, on May 19, at his press conference, de Gaulle himself revealed that he had no objection to trimming his sails to the gust they had stirred up.

Lagaillarde and his friends at that time said they considered de Gaulle's return to power only a "first step." Others took up

this phrase when de Gaulle included Mollet and Pflimlin in his government, but neither Soustelle nor Bidault. "We've been deceived!" cried the more excitable members of the Algiers Public Safety Committee, and one of them told the crowd that assembled to hear de Gaulle's speech on June 4: "A great deal of rubbish is still clogging up the works. We intend to continue our effort until the government is wholly composed of new men." Delbecque indignantly announced over Algiers radio his intention of organizing Public Safety Committees throughout Metropolitan France in order to campaign for the total liquidation of the old parliamentary system. "One does not cross the Rubicon," he cried, "merely for a fishing party."

De Gaulle's June 4 speech and his subsequent attitude gave convincing evidence of his will to seek a reasonable settlement in Algeria; but the comportment of his audiences underlined once more the dangerous political immaturity of the European mob. The officers in the Public Safety Committee, led by General Massu, had campaigned hard during the previous fortnight for the granting of full civil rights to all Moslems—a policy the *colons* had fought all their lives, but to which they were now willing to pay lip-service. On reaching Algeria de Gaulle stressed clearly that this was his policy, that henceforth a Moslem's vote would have the same value as a European's, that in his view a Moslem's rights and dignity were in no way inferior to a European's. This was on a par with preaching the rights of Negroes in Johannesburg, Nairobi, or Shreveport, but he went even further: he paid tribute to the courage of the Arab guerrillas whom the Europeans had been conditioned for more than three years to regard as terrorists and thugs. His audience cheered themselves hoarse . . . but their cheers were for the emotive words with which his speeches were seasoned—honor, fraternity, dignity, courage—rather than their content. That the fraternity he was extolling was something remote from the "*fraternité française*" of the Poujadists, that the dignity in question was Mos-

lem, and the courage that of Arab rebels—no one seemed to notice. Many of those present did not even bother to listen, shouting "*Algérie française*" over and over again like backward infants reciting a multiplication table. Their delirium was a vivid reminder of the threat this crowd could again represent, under the spell of a skilled demagogue, to Franco-Moslem understanding and what is left of France's democratic institutions. "Soustelle!" was the next commonest cry. On June 5, at Oran, de Gaulle thundered at the crowd, his voice and nerves fraying: "*Taisez-vous! Mais taisez-vous!*" ("Shut up!").

Meanwhile, back in Paris, the *colons'* mouthpieces, shaking off their stupor, began to point out that the liberal, federalist course de Gaulle favors for Algeria is not quite the solution the "patriots of May 13" had in mind. Other siren-voices on the right are urging the General to pursue the Algiers "revolution" to its logical end, terminate his compromise with the parliamentarians, ban all political parties, and dispense with the National Assembly (due to be recalled in October). One composite quotation can serve to sum up half a dozen right-wing comments published in the first half of June:

The essential aim of the national revolution which began in Algiers is the maintenance of French grandeur and the replacement of parliamentary democracy by a hierarchical authoritarian regime. This is the will of Algiers, where hope and faith were reborn. And just as Algiers expresses the true will of France, so whoever or whatever opposes Algiers is anti-France.

DE GAULLE'S precise constitutional proposals have yet to be announced. The clues to his intentions furnished by his past are neither helpful nor inspiring. In the late 1930's he flirted with the *Action Française*. In 1943, asked for his views on the procedure to be followed for restoring parliamentary institutions in liberated France, he replied: "Do you still believe in such things?" In 1946, with democratic fervor

at its height, he argued for a presidential regime on something like American lines. Today, although he could undoubtedly secure acceptance of a presidential regime if he wished, he appears to favor the retention of a Head of State with limited, largely symbolic, authority—on the existing Anglo-French model—and a separate chief executive (Prime Minister) with greatly strengthened powers. The Prime Minister would be chosen either by the Head of State or by a special electoral college: in any case Parliament's role would be diminished.

General de Gaulle's foreign policy offers fewer uncertainties. He has already assured interested diplomatic quarters, and the MRP and Socialist leaderships, of his fidelity to France's existing NATO and European commitments, though even in the absence of such assurances France's likely need of fresh credits before next winter would have tended to exert an inhibiting influence in the months to come. Of interest to Israel—and Britain—is the fact that the new Foreign Minister, M. Couve de Murville, is reputed to favor a more positive pro-Arab policy, once the Algerian problem is out of the way.

Could France under de Gaulle now become one of the more stable Western powers? It is just possible. If he fails to secure peace in Algeria and falls under the influence of the extreme right, the present Socialist leadership will probably be swept aside and the foundations laid for some kind of Popular Front. On the other hand, if de Gaulle holds out against reactionary pressure, pushes through a liberal settlement in Algeria, and disappoints those of his "sponsors" who desire the liquidation of democratic institutions in France, he will be in danger of being outflanked on the right. This is a threat he must live with, as a consequence of riding to power on an insurrectionary tide. One successful *coup* invites another. As Mendès-France is reported to have remarked: "If de Gaulle is France's Naguib, the man we must now look out for is Nasser."